REMARKS

Applicants are amending independent claim 1 and dependent claims 3, 4, and 7-9 to better describe the claimed invention. Thus, claims 1-10 currently are pending and are subject to examination in the above-captioned patent application. No new matter is added by the foregoing amendments, and these amendments are fully supported by the specification. See, e.g., Appl'n, Page 6, Lines 2-28; Page 8, Lines 21-26; and Page 11, Lines 27-32.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the above-captioned patent application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action mailed June 16, 2005, the Examiner objected to the Specification because the terms "EEPROM" and "LSI" allegedly were not clearly defined in the specification. Applicants have amended the specification to more clearly define the terms "EEPROM" and "LSI." Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objections to the specification.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being rendered obvious by U.S. Patent No. 6,567,915 to Guthery in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,772,133 to Kambayashi et al. ("Kambayashi"). The Examiner also rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being rendered obvious by Guthery in view of Kambayashi and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,123,045 to Ostrovsky et al. ("Ostrovsky"). Moreover, the Examiner rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being rendered obvious by Guthery in view of Kambayashi and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,198,669 to Iguchi. To the extent that these rejections remain

applicable in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections, as follows.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to describe a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising "a plurality of function blocks; a nonvolatile memory unit which stores therein coded **license information indicative of a usable/unusable status <u>separately</u> for each of the plurality of function blocks**; and a decoder circuit which decodes the license information stored in said nonvolatile memory unit, and **makes each of the function blocks <u>separately</u> either usable or unusable depending on the decoded license information**." Thus, in Applicants' independent claim 1, the license information indicates a usable/unusable status separately for each of the plurality of function blocks, and the decoder circuit makes each of the function blocks separately either usable or unusable depending on the decoded license information.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in independent claim 1, Guthery is directed towards performing various authentication processes with respect to IC devices, such as smart cards. Specifically, in Guthery, an EEPROM 58 stores therein an authentication table, as shown in Fig. 3. The information that is included in the authentication table is used to authenticate a card holder, a bank, and a store. Further, information that is stored in a count field 96 is used to permit a predetermined number of uses of the card by the card holder.

Guthery is directed to the authentication of identities regarding the use of the IC card, and as such, the control of use according to the authentication process taught by Guthery is directed towards the IC card (device) as a whole, and is not directed towards each separate part (function block) of the IC card. Guthery neither discloses nor
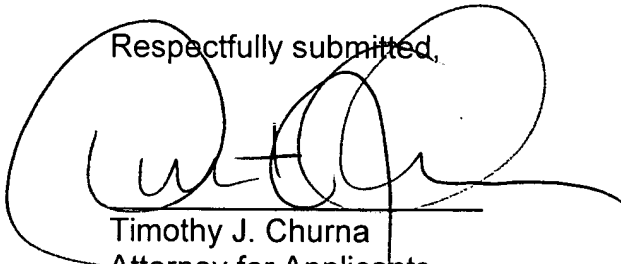
suggests that the license information is indicative of a usable/unusable status separately for each of the plurality of function blocks, as described in Applicants' independent claim 1.   Moreover, none of the other cited references (Kambayashi, Ostrovsky, and Iguchi) disclose or suggest that the license information is indicative of a usable/unusable status separately for each of the plurality of function blocks.   Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the obviousness rejection of independent claim 1 at least for this reason.

Claims 2-10 depend from allowable, independent claim 1.   Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also withdraw the obviousness rejection of claims 2-10 at least for this reason.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-captioned patent application is in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an in-person or telephonic interview with Applicants' representatives would expedite the prosecution of the above-captioned patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney of records. Applicants believe that no fees are due as a result of this response to the outstanding Office Action in the above-captioned patent application. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicants and those determined by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, please charge any such variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,

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